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Capture of a California Condor.

BY H. G. RISING, LOS ANGELES, CAL.

[Read before the Southern Division of the Cooper Orn. Club, Jan. 28, 1899.]

I WAS out on a hunting trip after deer, with a party of three Santa Monica boys and a rancher named Decker, who was showing us over the mountains. We had divided our party, and Decker and myself were together, while the others went in a different direction. We started before daylight and hunted until about 9 o'clock without seeing any deer. We decided that there was no use in trying any more that morning, and started for the cabin in which we were camped. When we came to the top of one of the rocky ridges, which we had to cross, we stopped a moment to get our breath as the climbing was rather steep. In front of us lay a very deep rocky canyon, and opposite the point on which we stood was a limestone cliff, about 175 feet high. The canyon dropped down in a succession of small waterfalls through an opening in this cliff. We were a little above the top of the cliff and consequently had a fine view of it.

While standing there I noticed an adult Vulture perched about twenty-five feet below the top of the cliff and showed her to Decker. We watched her a few minutes and then tried to scare her by shouting at her, but she would not take wing. We then threw stones at her but they all fell short, striking the cliff far below her perch. At last Decker proposed that I should shoot at the cliff near her but I declined, saying that he had better do so as his rifle was smaller than mine. I cautioned him to be careful not to hit her, and he told me that he was going to shoot to one side of where she sat. He raised his rifle and fired, and I was astonished to see her go tumbling and fluttering down the cliff. I turned to Decker and proceeded to remonstrate with him for shooting the bird, but he declared that he had not shot at her and did not understand how he had made such a bad shot.

I told him that, as he had killed her, I might as well try to get her skin but he said that it was impossible to get to the bottom of the cliff, as the falls above and below could not be passed without

a rope. I intended to try however, so I started to get below the cliff so as to climb up. Meanwhile Decker went back to camp. When part way down the cliff I saw a young Vulture sitting on a narrow ledge about half way up the cliff, and off to one side of the gorge where the water came through. I then understood why the old bird would not leave. After a hard climb I at last reached the base of the cliff and there found the old bird with one wing crippled, but still full of fight. After a hard tussle with her, I at last succeeded in killing her by driving the heavy blade of my knife into her brain. She used her beak and claws with good effect and I would have been well scratched had I not had on heavy overalls and leather leggings. She also fought with her wings, striking a pretty severe blow. I found later while skinning her that she had been struck either by the bullet glancing, or by a splinter of rock, as the only wound she had was a severe bruise on the breast next the wing and the bone broken, while the skin was still intact. The bullet must have flattened out and had sufficient force to break the bone and still not break the skin.

After disposing of the old bird I thought that I would try and climb a little nearer the young one so as to get a better look at it. I climbed up the falls until opposite the ledge on which the young bird sat and was delighted to find that it ran all the way over to the fall, so that I could get across without much difficulty. I went across, and when I got nearly to the bird the ledge widened out to a width of about five feet. The young one immediately showed fight, and I found that if I tried to do anything with it on the ledge, that it would surely throw me over. So I poked it off with my rifle which I still carried, and it half flew and half fell to the bottom. I left my rifle on the ledge and went down the way I came, as fast as I dared climb. When I reached the bottom I found the young one on top of a big boulder that was about fifteen feet high. I climbed up a sycamore

sapling, that fortunately was growing close beside the rock, and soon poked him off with a dry limb. By the time I had got down again he was across the canyon and hopping up the rocks on the opposite side, using both his wings and his feet. I started up after him and reached up and caught him by one leg, just as he was about to make another jump. He reached down with his beak for my hand, but I was fortunate enough to get hold of his neck with my other hand before he caught me. He struggled and flapped his wings and I had a hard time of it for a few minutes, but at last I managed to tie his feet with my handkerchief. I then tore the braid off the brim of my hat and tied his beak securely, getting two or three awful pinches before I finished. I then slung him over my shoulder, holding him by the feet, and started to climb up the canyon, leaving the dead bird and my rifle to take care of themselves. At last I got up over the falls, getting some hard tumbles meanwhile. Every time I had a particularly hard stretch to climb he would spread his wings and try to fly and would pull me over and down I would

go to the bottom, and not as comfortably as I would have liked. However, I at last got him to camp and put him in an old chicken house, which was on the place. That afternoon one of the boys and I went back and brought the rifle and dead Vulture to camp.

The next afternoon I got him to eat some raw venison by putting a small piece on the end of a sharp stick. At first he would pick at it, but after a while he got tired and would only open his mouth and hiss. I then forced a piece of paper in his throat and he had to swallow it to keep from choking. After a little he began to understand that it was good to eat and then there was no further trouble about his eating. Inside of three days he would eat out of my fingers without offering to peck at me. I had more trouble in teaching him to drink but finally managed to teach him that also. He measured just eight feet across the wings when I procured him, and was probably about five months old. I captured him on the 25th day of August, 1898. He is growing right along, and seems to be in perfect health, and gives promise of becoming a very fine pet.

Nesting of the Wilson's Snipe in Utah.

ACCORDING to most, if not all the authorities, this species nests in the north, but I have found them breeding in this locality in abundance and have taken their eggs for several years. They arrive early in April, as soon as the snow is off the shallow ponds and low lands, and their whistle becomes a familiar sound both during the day and in the evening. Nest building commences soon after they arrive and nests have been found from April 29 to as late as July 11.

The nests are invariably placed within a few inches of the water, either stagnant, or by the side of irrigating ditches or waste streams. The nest is composed of dry wire grass loosely laid into a shallow platform, though occasionally raised two or three inches above the surface of the ground. Occasionally they select for a site the top of a hummock, but usually the nest is flat on the ground and extremely difficult to find as the eggs and nest have the general appearance of the surrounding

dead grass and rushes.

The eggs exhibit the greatest possible variation in markings and colors, a well selected series showing about the handsomest variation of any I have seen, unless it be those of the Sharpshinned Hawk. Typical specimens are of a dull yellow background, shaded and overlaid with bold heavy blackish and brown markings. These markings are usually long in proportion to their width and form a "corkscrew" appearance on the shell, extending from the pointed end of the egg in an oblique right direction, and seldom straight toward the larger end. In some specimens the ground color is a bright yellowish shade in which case the markings are usually very bold and distinct; in others the markings are highly colored running through all the shades from rich sienna to deep brown and blackish. The bird is never shot here for game and breeds without molestation.

H. C. JOHNSON,

American Fork, Utah, Jan. 27, '99.